

THE GREAT LARAN REBELLION.

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CHAPTER IV.—CONTINUED.

"Then we have to lose," said the woman, calmly. "These people are all friends. You are to change your garments immediately. My servant will help you. Explanations and further directions must wait."

She called the negro servant and said to him: "Now, then, Fan, be as quick as you can. We are fifteen minutes late."

"This way, professor," said the servant, with a grin, as he pointed to the old mill.

Laport, without further words, made a bow and followed the negro into the dilapidated structure. Here, in one of the recesses where there remained a clear space and a flooring, there was a hamper, such as is used at picnics. There were one or two plates, and a napkin conspicuously in its strapped lid. The negro brushed them away and hurriedly tore open the basket. It was packed tightly and carefully with a complete outfit of clothes, which the man lifted out and spread in a pile upon a clean newspaper. Laport was watching him with curious interest.

"Excuse me, sah," said the servant, "you ain't got no time. You got to get dem duds off lively. I've got to dress you. Take 'em off—take 'em off—I've got to put 'em in dis yere wicker works."

Thus recalled to the urgency of the moment Laport began at once to divest himself of the disguise he wore. As fast as he relieved himself of his clothing, the negro placed it in the hamper, and when it was full he excused himself and carried it away.

He was not gone more than five minutes, and when he came back he was empty handed. What he did with it Laport never knew. But even then he had an instinctive feeling that his complete destruction or effectual hiding had been provided for.

Fan then proceeded to dress him in the most expeditious, but the same time the most scrupulous, manner. In spite of the nervous anxiety of Laport, he could not help wondering at the systematic provision that had been made for a thorough and complete change of appearance. The linen, cuffs, collar, studs, sleeve buttons, finger ring, watch chain, had not been forgotten. He was quickly dressed in a handsome suit of gray tweed, an immaculate vest and a fine soft black hat with a broad brim. He was shaven with marvelous dexterity, fitted with a flowing gray wig and gold glasses, a pair of silk stockings and riding boots with spurs, a field glass thrown over his shoulder and rouge given to his face; and when Fan held up a little mirror before his eyes, Laport saw himself transformed into a comfortable well-to-do governor with a florid face that indicated good living.

"Excuse me, sah," said Fan, as he admired his work. "You'll have to sojer up, jes from out your nose and put yer shoulders back. Yer got a bad sag in yer backbone. Der duds ain't made for it. Jes one more pint—good nuff, if yer can hold him dar."

Fan ran his eye over the details and looked at a little watch that he carried in his vest pocket. Laport saw that it was exactly like the one Kent had given him and that the woman had exhibited while he was on the millstone. Indeed, it reminded the servant to replace in Laport's vest pocket the timepiece that Kent had given him. He did this with the remark: "Dat's de general's show. 'Tother one's for to make a gallus show."

A moment later he had gathered up all the evidences of his work and summoned the lady who appeared to be his mistress. She came in flushed, as if she had been riding, looked at Laport critically and said:

"You are Dr. Samuel Franklin, of Cincinnati, and I am your daughter. You are to assume, to the best of your ability, the manner of a rather peremptory but kind-hearted parent. You can scold me for my extravagance a little if you like. You are to carry this roll of bills and when called upon pay our expenses. You are also to take this little checkbook and draw your check as I direct. Further directions I can give you as we journey. The horses are at the door."

Five minutes later Laport was on the back of a handsome horse, riding by the side of a jaunty and spirited companion. Immediately behind them rode three others, who made up the group. The way for some distance was across fields, but presently they came into one of those grass-grown lanes that divide farms, and a little later struck a common country highway running southwest. Not a word was spoken by Laport's companion for a mile or two except an occasional direction as to speed. But after an hour's ride they came to a group of houses, when she said: "It is necessary that we show ourselves here. You are to preserve the air of the father of the family—that is all."

At the largest of the houses the party drew up and asked for a drink of water from a man at the door. While it was being served Laport remained in the road—the rest drew up chatteringly at the door and hurriedly to tell the man how they had been hurrying back to Shirleyville. Some questions were also asked about better roads; and then, with flippant jests, some coin was flung to the man and they started off again. It was now half-past three o'clock and a ride of half an hour brought them to an interesting and evidently not much traveled road. "We're turn south," said Laport's companion. "The rest go on to Shirleyville. Do you understand? There is no telegraph on our route."

The moment they were in the new road she said: "I shall have to ask you to make the best time you can for the next five miles, until we come to another highway. Your horse has a good gait—let him have his head."

She then struck her animal and Laport followed her. The pace was a painful one, for he no longer had the suppleness of youth. But determination supplanted him with endurance, and they rode at a rapid pace through an uninhabited tract, and he was much relieved when they turned once more into a well-traveled road that ran in a westerly direction, and his companion said: "You can take it easy now. We'll walk our horses here and let them dry. We are safe. If you are pursued the cent will lead to Shirleyville."

She drew up by his side as she spoke. "I can now tell you," she said, "what your route will be. We shall stop for the night at a hotel in Charlotte. It is ten miles farther on. You will pay our bill in the morning with a check which the landlord will cash because I have already cashed the two which Mr. Kent got you to sign, and the landlord knows they are good. There is a branch railroad running from Charlotte to Penikese—thirty miles west. We shall succeed in the morning in getting off with our horses on a trip to the Penikese glen. The horses will go on to Branford, where they will be taken care of, they having been obtained there. At the Penikese house we give out that we are going to stop with a friend in town and leave the hotel in the evening. You will then have to walk three miles to reach a trunk line railroad. If we catch an express train we shall most likely be in Wheeling just six hours ahead of a dispatch.

"But if we do not?" asked Laport with considerably more curiosity than apprehension.

"In that case we shall have to depend on the discrepancy between the description and the appearance. The probability is that the pursuit will be thrown off at Shirleyville. There is no means of knowing that we left the party until the pursuers reach their steps. The landlord at Charlotte will tell them that he has been receiving your checks before the date of the escape, and saw you sign one with his own eyes. It will take some time afterward to ascertain that we are not in Penikese yet. If, however, the telegraph is used without waiting to ascertain that fact the detective will board the train when we pull into Wheeling."

"Are you prepared for that?"

"Yes, you change your disguise before taking that train."

"Ah," said Laport, with relief.

"And you go on alone," added the woman.

"Yes," said Laport, inquiringly.

"You reach Cincinnati and go to the Columbia hotel, an obscure place. You will look on the register for Bernard Biddle. He's your old friend. He will get you over into Kentucky that night."

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can work for me a year, save a handsome competence and spend the remainder of your days in some safe place comfortably. You are not eating."

"Parson me," said Laport. "I will drink this coffee and listen to you. I have no appetite."

"No," said Laport. "My curiosity to hear what you have to say is too great to permit me to eat. Proceed."

"There are two orders of men, Mr. Laport," said Kent. "One order deals with ideas, the other with events. They are incompatible, but supplementary. The greatest achievements

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THE EVIL OF SUICIDE.

Dr. Talmage Discourses on Its Spread and the Cause.

Infidelity and Agnosticism to Blame—The Fate of the Man Who Deliberately Snaps the Bond Between His Body and His Soul.

The latest sermon given out through the press by Rev. T. DeWitt Talmage was upon the subject of "Suicide," the text being from Acts xvi, 27-28: "He drew out his sword and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying: 'Do thyself no harm.' The sermon is as follows:

Here is a would-be suicide arrested in his deadly attempt. He was a sheriff, and according to the Roman law, a bailiff himself must suffer the punishment of an escaped prisoner; and if the prisoner breaking jail was sentenced to be hanged for three or four years, then the sheriff must be hanged for three or four years; and if the prisoner breaking jail was to have suffered capital punishment, then the sheriff must suffer capital punishment.

The sheriff had received special charge to keep a sharp lookout for Paul and Silas. The government had not had confidence in bolts and bars to keep safe these two clergymen, about whom there seemed to be something strange and supernatural.

Sure enough, by miraculous power, they are free, and the sheriff, waking out of a sound sleep, and supposing these ministers have run away, and knowing that they were to die for preaching Christ, and realizing that he must therefore die, rather than go under the executioner's ax on the morrow, and suffer public disgrace, resolves to precipitate his own death. But before the sharp, keen, glittering dagger of the sheriff could strike his heart, one of the unlooked-for prisoners arrests the blade by the command: "Do thyself no harm."

In olden time, and where Christianity had not interfered with it, suicide was considered honorable and a sign of courage. Demosthenes poisoned himself when told that Alexander's ambassador had demanded the surrender of the Athenian orators. Socrates killed himself rather than surrender to Philip of Macedonia. Cato, rather than submit to Julius Caesar, took his own life, and after three times his wounds had been dressed, tore them open and perished. Mithridates killed himself rather than submit to Pompey, the conqueror. Hannibal destroyed his life by poison from his ring, considering life unbearable. Lycurgus a suicide. Brutus a suicide. After the disaster of Moscow Napoleon always carried with him a preparation of opium, and one night his servant heard the ex-emperor arise, put something in a glass and drink it, and soon after the groans aroused all the attendants, and it was only through utmost medical skill he was resuscitated from the stupor of the opiate.

Times have changed, and yet the American conscience needs to be toned up on the subject of suicide. Have you seen a paper in the last month that did not announce the passage out of life by one's own behest? Defaulters, alarmed at the idea of exposure, quit life precipitately. Men losing large fortunes go out of the world because they cannot endure earthly existence. Frustrated affection, domestic infelicity, dyspeptic impatience, anger, remorse, envy, jealousy, destitution, misanthropy are considered sufficient causes for absconding from life by Paris green, by laudanum, by belladonna, by Othello's dagger, by halter, by leap from the abutment of a bridge, by fire-arms. More cases of "felo de se" in the last two years of the world's existence. The evil is more and more spreading.

A pulpit not long ago expressed some doubt as to whether there was really anything wrong about quitting this life when it became disagreeable, and there are found in respectable circles people apologetic for the crime which Paul in the text arrested. I shall show you before I get through that suicide is the worst of all crimes, and I shall say for me to say to you that I would not have the early part of the sermon I will admit that some of the best Christians that have ever lived have committed self-destruction, but always in dementia, and not responsible. I have no more doubt about their eternal felicity than I have of the Christian who dies in his bed in the delirium of typhoid fever. While the shock of the catastrophe is very great, I charge all those who have had Christian friends under cerebral observation step off the boundaries of this life, to have no doubt about their happiness. The dear Lord took them right out of their dazed and frenzied state into perfect safety. How Christ feels toward the insane you may know from the kind way he treated the demoniac of Gadara and the child lunatic, and the potency with which he hushed the tempests either of sea or brain.

Secondly, the sad profile of intellectual giants had two grand spectacles of those who have buried themselves out of life, and notwithstanding Christianity is against it, and the arguments and the useful lives and the illustrious deaths of its disciples, it is a fact alarmingly patent that suicide is on the increase. What is the cause? I charge upon infidelity and agnosticism this whole thing. If there be no hereafter, or if that hereafter be blissful without reference to how we live and how we die, why not move back the folding doors between this world and the next? And when our existence here becomes troublesome, why not pass right over into Elysium? Put this down among your most solemn reflections, and consider it after you go to your homes; there has never been a case of suicide where the operator was not either demented, and therefore irresponsible, or an infidel. I challenge all the ages, and I challenge the whole universe. There never has been a case of self-destruction while in full appreciation of his immortality and of the fact that that immortality would be glorious or wretched according as he accepted Jesus Christ or rejected Him.

You say it is business trouble, or you say it is electrical currents, or it is this, or it is that, or it is the other thing. Why not go clear back, my friend, and acknowledge that in every case it is the abdication of reason or the teaching of infidelity which practically says: "If you don't like this life, get out of it, and you will land either in annihilation, where there are no notes to pay, no persecutions to

No one ever doubted the piety of William Cowper, the author of those three great hymns, "Oh, for a Closer Walk With God," "What Various Hindrances We Meet," "There is a Fountain Filled With Blood." William Cowper, who shares with Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley the chief honors of Christian hymnology. In hypochondria he resolved to take his own life, and rode to the river Thames, but found a man seated on some goods at the very point from which he expected to spring, and rode back to his home, and that night threw himself upon his own knife, but the blade broke, and then he hanged himself to the ceiling, but the rope parted. No wonder that when God mercifully delivered him from that awful dementia he sat down and wrote that other hymn just as memorable:

God moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform; He plants His footsteps in the sea, And rides upon the storm. Blind unbelief is sure to err, And scan His work in vain; God is His own interpreter, And He will make it plain.

While we make this merciful and righteous allowance in regard to those who were plunged into mental incoherence, I declare that the man who in the use of his reason, by his own act, snaps the bond between his body and his soul, goes straight into perdition. Shall I prove it? Revelation xxi, 8: "Murderers shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." Revelation xxi, 13: "Without are dogs and sorcerers, and whore-mongers, and murderers." You do not believe the New Testament? Then, perhaps, you believe the Ten Commandments: "Thou shalt not kill." Do you say all these passages refer to the taking of the life of others? Then I ask you if you are not responsible for your own life as for the life of others? God gave you special trust in you. He made you the custodian of your life as he made you the custodian of no other life. He gave you as weapons with which to defend it two arms to strike back assailants, and two eyes to watch for invasion, and a natural love of life which ought ever to be on the alert. Assassination of others is a mild crime compared with the assassination of yourself, because the latter case is treachery to an especial trust, it is the surrender of a castle you were especially appointed to keep, it is treason to a natural law and it is treason to God added to ordinary murder.

To show how God in the Bible looked upon this crime, I point you to the rogues' picture gallery in some parts of the Bible, the pictures of the people who have committed this unnatural crime. Here is the headless trunk of Saul on the walls